

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated April 12, 2007. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claims 2-5 and 7-17 stand for consideration in this application, wherein claims 1 and 6 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claims 2-5, 7-8, and 16-17 are being amended.

All amendments to the application are fully supported therein. Applicant hereby submits that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Formal Rejections

Claims 3-4, 9, and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 3-4 and 16-17 are being amended so as to meet the requirements 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

The First 35 U.S.C. §102(e) Rejections

Claims 1 and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Koichi et al. (EP 0650215 A2). As mentioned above, claims 1 and 6 are being cancelled, and therefore, the rejections of claims 1 and 6 are moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for holding that claims 10-15 are allowed. Applicant further thanks the Examiner for holding that claims 2, 5, and 7-8 would be allowed if

rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and that claims 3-4, 9, and 16-17 would be allowed if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 2, 5, and 7-8 are being amended so as to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Also, claims 3-4 and 16-17 are being amended so as to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as set forth above, while claims 3-4 are being amended so as to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. As to dependent claims 9, 16 and 17, the base claim being allowable, claims 9, 16 and 17 must also be allowable in the form of a dependent claim. Accordingly, allowance of claims 2-5, 7-9, and 16-17 are respectfully requested.

Applicant will point out that the reasons for allowability of the above referenced claims are not limited to the reasons for allowance as set forth in the Office Action.

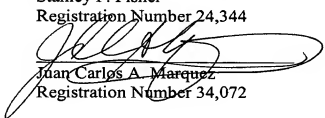
Conclusion

In light of the Amendments and Remarks, Applicant respectfully request early and favorable action with regard to the present application, and a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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